



GREATFIELDS SCHOOL

Looked After Children Policy

Approved by SLT:

Date: September 2025

Approved by Local Governing Board:

Date: September 2025

Next Review Date:

September 2026



Partnership Learning



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Background

Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of LAC have suffered a disrupted childhood and experienced adverse events. It is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational under-achievement when compared to their peers. LAC often achieve poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population. Fewer LAC progress to Higher Education or follow progression pathways that will lead to future economic success and well-being.

At Greatfields School we believe that all Looked After Children, and those previously in care, should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Devon children. As a community we aim to be champions for Looked After Children and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting their educational achievement and social and emotional development.

To do this we commit to:

- Supporting them to raise their aspirations
- Giving them a sense of the control they have over their own lives
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption

Legal framework

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (Section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (Sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (Section 31) or interim care order (Section 38)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (Section 21)

Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are “accommodated” by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a children’s home or in a residential school. The term “in care” refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a children’s home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision.

For all children who receive more than 75 days of ‘short breaks’ in every 12 months LAC status applies and an independent Reviewing Officer is appointed. As the care arranged is not continuous, academic attainment does not have to be reported in the same way to the DfE.

All these groups are said to be “Looked After Children” (LAC). They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.





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Policy Objective:

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (Post CLA) on the roll of the school.

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and Post CLA:

Sarah Bennett

Name of the Delegated Designated Teacher for CLA and Post CLA:

Anne Wright

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and Post CLA:

Jane Hadlow

At Greatfields School we will create an environment where children looked after (CLA) and children previously looked after (Post-CLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions, in accordance with the **DfE Guidance Document for Designated Teachers**

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for CLA and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CLA experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise.

Our school community aims to champion the needs of CLA to ensure they make rapid progress during their period in care.

Our Aims for CLA:

- to provide a safe and secure environment where education is always central to the planning and all adults understand the specific needs of CLA and Post CLA
- to narrow the gap between the attainment of CLA and Post-CLA and their peers, ensuring accelerated and rapid progress
- that they benefit from school-based interventions, using the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective impact
- for all CLA to have a minimum of three Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meetings in an academic year and for the joint planning to actively impact on each child's learning on a daily basis, to ensure accelerated and rapid progress
- for all adults to provide discreet, sensitive, child-led support, with one key adult identified who will form a strong relationship and take a special interest in daily life at school
- that school systems facilitate discrete support, as appropriate
- CLA will be advantaged within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for
- CLA and their foster families will feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed into the community in recognition of the particular needs of this group.



Partnership Learning



Educational Planning for Children Looked After

Personal Education Plans (ePEP)

The school will ensure that every CLA on roll has a Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The **Headteacher** and **Governing Body** are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for CLA and Post-CLA. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the leadership team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role. They will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all CLA and Post-CLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff receives appropriate training.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After is **Sarah Bennett**. She is a qualified teacher, and will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and Post-CLA by:

- ensuring that the CLA or Post-CLA has access to quality first teaching
- tracking the progress of CLA and Post-CLA across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and book scrutinies
- ensuring that the PP+ is used effectively and efficiently
- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of CLA
- providing and attending training and offering advice to all school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive and has high expectations for CLA and PostCLA
- regularly reporting to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of CLA and Post-CLA and school resource and staff training needs for working with this group
- prioritising CLA for school-based additional support, even when the young person does not meet the criteria
- ensuring that CLA and Post CLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status
- ensuring that carers and care staff are engaged with the targets outlined in the PEP.

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and Post-CLA by:

- reading the school policy for CLA
- attending training, as appropriate
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher /Delegated Designated Teacher
- referring to the Designated Teacher /Delegated Designated Teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating a 'CLA-friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for CLA by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available





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Attendance:

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of CLA and Post-CLA to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as an early intervention, as outlined in the attendance policy.

Admissions/ Transitions:

School procedures to support CLA during admission and transition include:

- prioritising CLA and Post-CLA at the point of admission
- the swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school
- early identification of staff mentor
- additional support and planning for CLA and Post-CLA at times of transition

Additional Educational Needs: The Graduated Approach:

All Staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA and Post-CLA with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria
- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the expectation of progress each academic year, as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit, ePEP

Special Educational Needs:

All Staff endeavour to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA and post CLA who have special educational needs by:

- adhering to graduated approach as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice
- having high expectation of minimum levels of progress each academic year (in line with the expectation set out in the ePEP)
- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEN Code of Practice
- Designated Teacher and SENDCO monitor delivery of interventions and review outcomes with class teacher
- where an EHCP is in place, PEPs and EHCP should be aligned to avoid duplication

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CLA and post CLA by:

familiarising themselves with the school's child protection policy and the 'DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education' document, if there are any safeguarding concerns.





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Alternative Provision:

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision, alternative to daily attendance at school, will be:

- a plan that will retain the CLA on the roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for reporting and accountable for the PP+
- an agreed part of the overall ePEP for the student
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the CLA or Post-CLA
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that ePEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

Suspensions:

We will make every effort to avoid suspending a CLA, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School. If there is no option other than suspension, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the suspension. School procedures are in place to reduce the risk of suspension of CLA and Post-CLA. (Ref: DfE Exclusion from Maintained Schools)

Multi-Agency Working:

School staff will engage with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This should include: Virtual Schools, Social Care, health, carers. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CLA and Post-CLA.

